

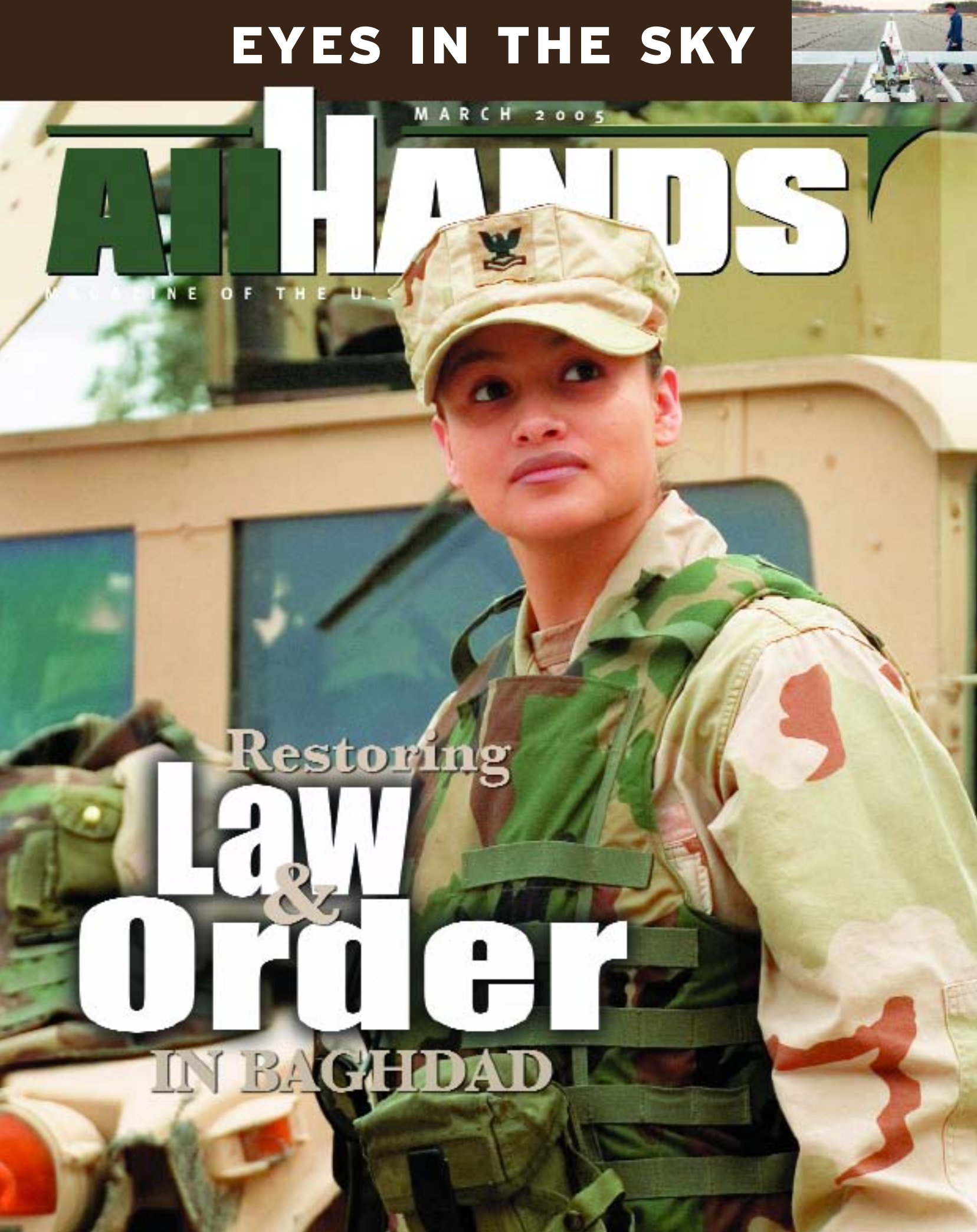
EYES IN THE SKY

MARCH 2005

AI HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S.

Restoring
**Law
&
Order**
IN BAGHDAD





[Number 1055]

ALL HANDS

12 Eyes in the Sky

[On the Front Cover]

Rebuilding the infrastructure of Iraq is not limited to construction, running water and electricity. LN2 Rachel Christofferson travels between Camp Victory and Baghdad, Iraq, by convoy, three times a week, to assist in the rebuilding of the Iraqi judicial system.

Photo by J01(SW) Monica J. Darby

[Next Month]

All Hands goes below the water line to the Engineering Department aboard USS *Donald Cook* (DDG 75).

During Operation *Desert Storm*, 27 Iraqis signaled their desire to surrender to a 16-foot wingspan, unmanned aerial vehicle. At the same time in Cincinnati, young Timothy Davis discovered the wonders of radio-control aircraft. Little did he realize his new hobby would lead to a Navy career as an aviation structural mechanic with Fleet Composite Squadron (VC) 6 Detachment Patuxent River, Md. – the same command whose aircraft the Iraqis surrendered to in 1991.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

March

[Features]

20 The Laws of Engagement

Usually, the only imminent dangers Legalman 2nd Class Rachel Christofferson faces are paper cuts. Now, Christofferson's primary legalman responsibilities are the same, but the hostile environment of Iraq has made her a soldier of sorts.



Photo by J01(SW) Monica J. Darby

28 The Ingleside Navy

Sea-borne mines have wreaked more havoc on American warships and account for more than 75 percent of all battle damage to those warships since World War II. The threat is so great that Mine Warfare Command has a fleet of specialized ships, helicopters and explosive ordnance disposal personnel dedicated to hunting, sweeping and eliminating mines.



Photo by J01(SW/SS) James G. Pinsky

[Departments]

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HMC Jeffrey Cavallo, an independent duty corpsman assigned to Health Services Detachment, Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 11, 11th MEU (Special Operations Capable), examines a 13-year-old Iraqi during a Humanitarian Assistance Operation (HAO) in the village of Ash Shafiyah, Iraq. The HAO provided medical and dental treatment to more than 115 Iraqis.

Photo by Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Chago Zapata

Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
MCPON (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott

These questions came from discussions with Sailors at recent *All Hands* calls

Q: What resources are available to help me study for my upcoming exam?

A: There is no quick or easy way to study for an advancement exam. It takes a lot of work and it's important that you start early to prepare for your upcoming exam. Your first stop should be to get your bibliography from the Navy Advancement Center online at <https://www.advancement.cnet.navy.mil>.

To find everything you need to properly prepare for your exam, the Navy Advancement Center also has the Enlisted Advancement Exam Strategy Guide for your rating. This strategy guide also contains your bibliography and gives you a reference list for professional military knowledge, rating-specific knowledge and sample exam questions.

Inside the strategy guide you'll find tips to help you best prepare for your exam, a list of instructions, e-learning courses and training manuals to provide you with all of the information you need to pass the exam.

Once you have all the material you need, create a study plan, follow your plan and consider forming a study group with your shipmates.

Your strategy guide is really the best source available

Speaking with Sailors is a monthly column initiated by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy as a way of reaching out to the men and women of the fleet, whether they are stationed just down the road or halfway around the world.

to study for your upcoming exam. It explains how the advancement system works and the variables that go into determining your final multiple. ■

Q: I'm in danger of losing the leave due to our command's deployment schedule. How will I be able to keep the leave days I've earned?

A: As many of our shipmates continue to serve on the front lines of the global war on terrorism, the opportunity for taking leave in some individual cases

may be limited.

If you're deployed for more than 120 consecutive days aboard a ship or with a mobile unit, check the new regulations that became effective with NAVADMIN 244/04. The changes allow qualifying Sailors the opportunity to now carry over up to 120 days of leave. The previous maximum allowance that could be requested was 90 days, and the standard maximum allowance remains at 60 days.

If you plan on going over the maximum of 60 days, make sure to send your request for special leave accrual through your chain of command by the end of the fiscal year.

You work hard to earn the ability to take a break from the everyday responsibilities that comes with serving your country. We want to make sure that you don't lose the time off that you've earned and deserve. ■

ALL HANDS

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www.navy.mil

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Blue Angels 2005 Show Schedule

The Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, have announced their schedule for the 2005 show season. Following winter training, the Blue Angels will begin its 59th season at Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif.

The Blue Angels are scheduled to perform 69 demonstrations at 35 air shows throughout the United States during the 2005 season. While the following dates have been approved, they are subject to change. For the most updated schedule information, log on to www.blueangels.navy.mil throughout the air show season.

March

12 NAF El Centro, Calif.
19-20 Punta Gorda, Fla.

April

2-3 NAS Fort Worth, Texas
9-10 NAS Corpus Christi, Texas
16-17 Wilmington, N.C.
23-24 Vidalia, Ga.
30 Charleston, S.C.

May

7-8 MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.
14-15 Barksdale AFB, La.
21-22 Dobbins AFB, Ga.
24-25 U.S. Naval Academy,
Annapolis, Md.
27 U.S. Naval Academy Graduation
Flyover, Annapolis, Md.
28-29 Willow Grove, Pa.

June

4-5 Maguire AFB, N.J.
11-12 Janesville, Wis.
18-19 North Kingstown, R.I.
25-26 Evansville, Ind.

July

2-3 Pensacola Beach, Fla.
9-10 Fargo, N.D.
16-1? Milwaukee
23-24 Muskegon, Mich.
30-31 Kalispell, Mont.

August

6-7 Seattle
13-14 Grand Junction, Colo.
20-21 (weekend off)
27-28 Indianapolis, Ind.

September

3-4 NAS Patuxent River, Md.
10-11 NAS Brunswick, Maine
17-18 NAS Oceana, Va.
24-25 Gainesville, Fla.

October

1-2 Millington, Tenn.
8-9 San Francisco
15-16 MCAS Miramar, Calif.
22-23 NAS Pt. Mugu, Calif.
29-30 Chattanooga, Tenn.

November

5-6 Jacksonville Beach, Fla.
11-12 NAS Pensacola, Fla.

For more information, contact the Blue Angels public affairs office at (850) 452-3955 or bapao@navy.mil

▲ The Blue Angels soar through the bottom of a looping maneuver with the speed breaks extended to slow the aircraft's airspeed during a 2004 air show in Davenport, Iowa.

Photo by PH2 Saul McSween

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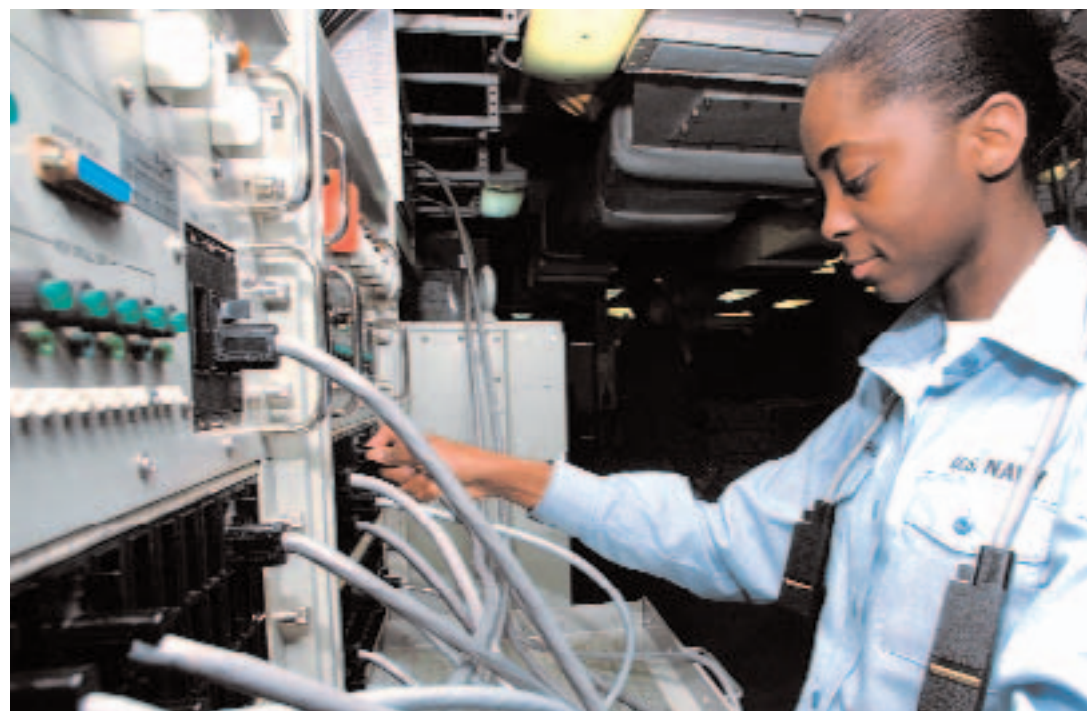
CREO/REGA Categories Updated

The Career/Reenlistment Objectives (CREO), Rating Entry for General Apprentices (REGA) and the critical skills Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) codes have been updated and released in a naval message.

This message, updated following the junior petty officer advancement exams, provides rating availability for non-designated strikers, advancement forecasts, CREO rating classifications, a list of critical skills and Perform to Serve (PTS) guidance.

“Keeping Sailors informed of opportunities gives them better flexibility and control of their careers, and is a key theme in the Navy’s Human Capital Strategy,” said LCDR Juliet Cook, an advancement planner for the Chief of Naval Personnel in Washington, D.C.. “The information provided in this message should be used as a tool in command professional development boards in guiding the career decisions of junior personnel.”

CREO 1 ratings are considered undermanned, CREO 2 ratings are manned at the desired levels and CREO 3 ratings are overmanned. Overall, 10 ratings have moved from CREO 3 to CREO 2 at the E-4 level.



IT2 Laresa Buxton makes an adjustment on the Demand Assigned Multiple Access (DAMA) console aboard the *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier *USS Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75). The IT rating is one of 10 ratings undermanned at the E-4 level.

Ratings that continue to show promise in moving toward CREO 1 at the E-4 level are construction mechanic (CM), damage controlman (DC), illustrator/draftsman (DM), dental technician (DT), hospital corpsman (HM), intelligence specialist (IS), information systems technician (IT), musician (MU), quartermaster (QM) and religious program specialist (RP).

Sailors in ratings that have changed categories to CREO 2 or 3 may begin submitting PTS applications now. For Sailors whose rating has changed to CREO 1 but have previously received direction to convert or

separate under the PTS program, the PTS decision remains valid, and they will continue to convert or separate.

For more information on PTS and CREO/REGA, contact your command career counselor.

To view the naval message, visit www.bupers.navy.mil/navadmin/navo4/navo4283.txt.

For related news, visit the Chief of Naval Personnel Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/cnp. ■

Story by LTJG Kyle Raines, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.

Executive MBA Available for Norfolk, San Diego Areas Via Distance Learning

Four Executive Masters of Business Administration (EMBA) cohort degree programs will be available for mid- to senior-grade active-duty unrestricted line (URL) officers in the Norfolk and San Diego fleet concentration areas in 2005.

Instruction for two cohorts (25 students in each that function as a learning team) will begin the week of March 28, and the other

two cohorts will start the week of Sept. 26.

The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) defense-focused EMBA is a 24-month, Navy-funded, part-time graduate program that includes a financial management and acquisition concentration. This program is targeted at mid- to senior-grade active-duty URL officers (O-4 to O-5) who are unable to attend NPS residential postgraduate programs. Non-URL officers (O-4 and O-5) and civilians in grades GS-13 and GS-14 will also be considered for the program on a space available basis, with officers having first priority.

According to Douglas A. Brook, Ph.D., dean of the NPS School of Business and Public Policy, the EMBA cohort degree program can be extremely beneficial in building a career in the Navy as a mid- to upper-level leader and manager.

“Our defense-focused EMBA is a unique program, unlike any other in the country in its goal of providing high-quality relevant management education to a new generation of Navy leaders,” Brook said. “We are taking our NPS faculty expertise to officers in the fleet and preparing our graduates to take their future places managing complex organizations, large budgets and major programs.”

The program begins with a one-week temporary additional duty (TAD) orientation at the NPS campus in Monterey, Calif. Funding for TAD travel must be provided by the student’s parent command and cannot be the responsibility of the individual. During orientation, students will take a two-credit-hour course in managing teams. Orientation for the March 2005 cohorts is scheduled for the week of March 21-25, and for the September cohorts the week of Sept. 19-23.

The NPS faculty will use video teleconferencing (VTC), the Internet and other distance learning modes to teach the follow-on courses. Students will meet in VTC-capable classrooms once a week during normal duty hours for six to seven hours of instruction. Norfolk and satellite locations in the fleet concentration area (FCA) will hold VTC classes on Tuesdays beginning March 29. San Diego area locations will conduct training on Thursdays beginning March 31.

Students will take two college classes per quarter for eight quarters, and take all classes as part of a learning team. While course absences due to military requirements are factored into the course planning, students are expected and required to attend classes with their learning teams and complete all degree requirements.

“The cohort model—in which students join and progress through their studies as a group—fosters working effectively as a learning team by sharing experiences, knowledge and strengths,” said retired CAPT Pat Flanagan, EMBA program director at the Naval Post Graduate School. “Through this working relationship, the students are able to establish a professional network with their colleagues that endures and adds real value as they progress in their career as Navy leaders, and confront Navy resource management issues and analyze investment opportunities.”

Eligibility requirements for the program include having an undergraduate degree from an accredited four-year college or university, a 2.6 (or higher) grade point average, department head or mid-level management experience, a strong potential for promotion and full command support. Officers selected for the program must be able to complete

Electronics Technician 3rd Class Tammie Walker was recently named the Naval Network Warfare Command Sailor of the Quarter. She was personally commended on her selection by VADM James D. McArthur Jr., Commander, Naval Network Warfare Command. Her selection was based on both her initiative to help others in the work center and positive customer service-oriented attitude. She also showed an outstanding presence to the board and dedication to duty.



the full 24-month program at their FCA site. Officers who already have a graduate degree funded through any DOD assistance or veteran’s educational benefit program are not eligible for this program.

The application deadline for the March cohorts has passed. The application deadline for the September cohorts is July 15. Applications must be submitted in the format listed in NAVADMIN 268/04 and sent, along with a copy of undergraduate transcripts, via the candidate’s activity commanding officer to the Naval Postgraduate School, EMBA Director, Code GB/FL. See NAVADMIN 268/04 for specific details and other qualification requirements.

All potential EMBA applicants are encouraged to visit the NPS Web site and complete an online interest form at their earliest convenience. For additional information on the program or the Naval Postgraduate School, visit the school’s Web site at www.nps.navy.mil.

For related news, visit the

Naval Education and Training Command Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/cnet. ■

Story by Jon Gagne, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Education and Training Command.

Policy Changes Help Wounded Troops Stay in Service

Fundamental changes have taken place in the DOD’s disability policy, a top Pentagon official told attendees at the 17th DOD Disability Forum in December.

John M. Molino, acting deputy undersecretary of defense for equal opportunity, cited a December 2003 visit by President George W. Bush to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington, D.C., when the President noted that advancements in medical treatment and

Around the Fleet

recovery allow many more wounded service members to resume their careers.

"Today, if wounded service members want to remain in uniform and can do the job, the military tries to help them stay," Molino recalled the president telling the patients.

"This statement, this attitude," Molino continued, "has implications for everything from accessibility policy on military installations to the long-standing expectation that every active-duty service member must be able to deploy to combat anywhere in the world. We're re-examining our basic assumptions, and basic changes are on the way."

The department is committed to doing all it can to bring those changes about, Molino told the group.

"We're moving aggressively to help service members remain on active duty if they wish to do so," he said. "This is the news in DOD disability policy today."

Noting that with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld wholeheartedly supporting keeping capable service members in the DOD fold, Molino said defense personnel officials also are looking for ways to improve opportunities for veterans with

disabilities in DOD's civilian work force. ■

Story by Rudi Williams, who is assigned to American Forces Press Service, Alexandria, Va.

Career Management System Offers Expanded Service

Navy Personnel Command (NPC) has launched a new, improved JASS (Job Advertising Selection System) currently used by commands, career counselors, Sailors and detailers to make career choices.

The new system is referred to as JCMS (for JASS Career Management System) and will be rolled out in several 'spirals' or phases over the next several months.

"It has been a seamless transition for Sailors looking at available opportunities and applying for jobs," said Master Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (AW) Bill Place, the enlisted assignments leading chief petty officer at Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

JCMS bridges the gap between the legacy distribution systems (JASS) and the Sea Warrior CMS functionality utilizing today's

legacy environment.

"The system provides Sailors a Web-based distribution system linked to the Five-Vector Model (5VM)," explained Place.

The initial applications of JCMS introduce the concepts of Job Family/Job Code and Job Title. Job Family classifies work that is similar in nature. The Job Title would be specific jobs within the rate. For instance, for culinary specialists (CS), the Job Code would numerically break down to the first three digits representing the job family and the last three digits representing the job title, such as baker, record-keeper or watch captain. The Job Code is still in development and will break things down even further as additional applications are brought into play.

Sailors who have logged on to NKO (Navy Knowledge Online) have already begun to see the benefits of CMS. They now have a direct link to their 5VM and access to their enlisted master file, which is a reference page containing personal career and contact data. Detailers are noticing the difference, too, as they take advantage of an additional avenue of direct feedback to the service member.

"Our MMs can now get a

quick response through email telling them whether they were selected for the job they want," said Surface Machinist's Mate CPO detailer, Chief Machinist's Mate (SW) Joseph DeMun.

The recent activation of JCMS is just the beginning, though. Sailors are already seeing more information at their fingertips than ever before. Via NKO, they're receiving alerts and notifications of billets that will enhance their careers and meet personal criteria they entered in the system.

"We are seeing about 9,000 hits between the NKO and JASS access to JCMS each requisition cycle," said Master Chief Operations Specialist (SW/AW) Pat Lumley, PERS-4 senior enlisted advisor. "This system provides customized data for each Sailor to help them make the best job choices to apply for."

JCMS is easy to access through www.nko.navy.mil, the www.bupers.navy.mil or the www.bupersaccess.navy.mil sites. Sailors will only be able to access their five-vector model (5VM) using the www.nko.navy.mil link.

"In JCMS, every Sailor will have the opportunity to select open requisitions and compare career growth opportunities via the 5VM," said Lumley. "Delivering

these capabilities is a huge win in allowing Sailors to make a more educated career decision, which directly impacts career growth."

For more information on JCMS, visit www.bupers.navy.mil or call 1-866-U-ASK-NPC. ■

Story by JOCS Karen Suich, who is assigned to Navy Personnel Command Communications.

Military W-2 Forms Make it Easier to Determine Tax Credit Eligibility

The 2004 W-2 forms for military members will now report pay earned while serving in a Combat Zone Tax Exclusion (CZTE) area. This information will provide members the opportunity to determine their eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC).

The CZTE pay information will be listed separately in Block 14 of the member's W-2 form and will not be included with taxable wage information (Block 1).

EITC and CTC qualifications are based on gross income, which includes pay earned while in a CZTE area. The addition of this information on 2004 W-2s will aid in determining whether a member meets the IRS requirements for EITC and CTC, and which method of computing taxes is most advantageous to each member's individual situation.

The 2004 W-2s are available on the myPay Web site at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>.

For more information on the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit or other tax issues, contact a unit tax advisor or

Eye on History

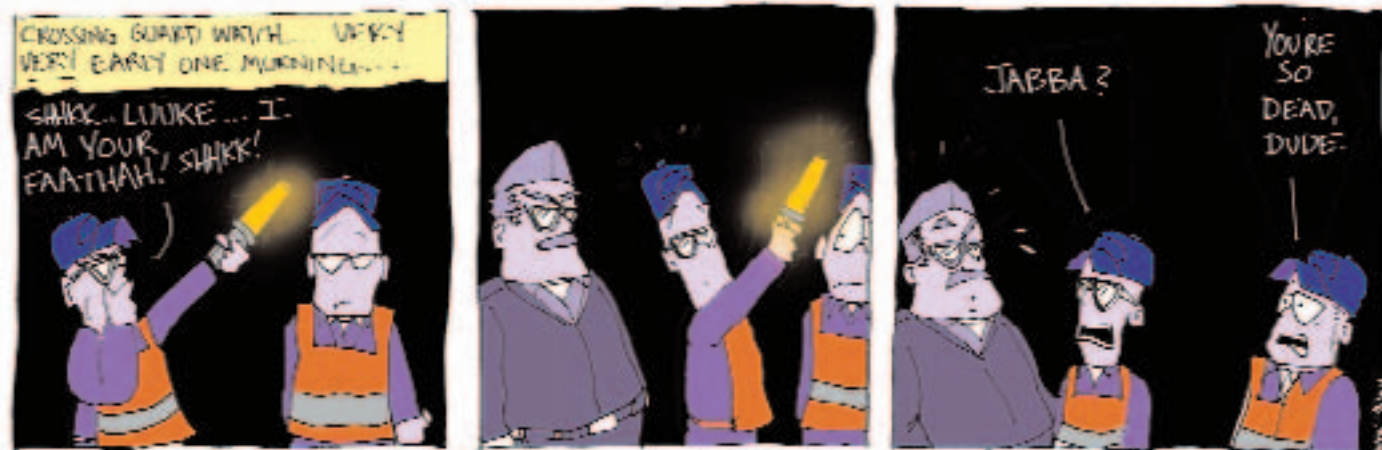


1973 ▲
(Left to right) AC2 K.C. Benson, ACC J.D. Moore and AC2 K.G. Fox plot helicopter sweeps over mine fields during Operation End Sweep aboard USS Inchon (LPH 33).

Ricky's Tour

By J01 Mike Jones

www.rickystour.com



Around the Fleet

finance office. Information is also available in the Armed Forces Tax Guide 2004 at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3.pdf and the Internal Revenue Service Web site at www.irs.gov.

Story courtesy of Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

Navy Institutes Professional Military Education Continuum

Citing the importance of continuing education to transformation goals and operational excellence, the Navy's Chief Learning Officer, VADM Alfred G. Harms Jr., commander, Naval Education and Training Command (NETC), recently announced the Navy's new Professional Military Education (PME) Continuum in November.

The PME Continuum integrates advanced education (beyond secondary school level), traditional Navy-specific Professional Military Education (NPME), Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) and leadership development. It sequences learning opportunities with significant career phases, allowing for newer personnel to receive more analytical and technical training, while those more senior will be offered strategic and management-oriented learning opportunities. "We must adopt a more comprehensive approach to education that fully acknowledges the relevance of education to mission success," said Harms. "It is essential that we broaden the professional and intellectual horizons of Sailors throughout their careers

to better prepare them to operate tomorrow's fleet, and to assume key naval and joint leadership roles." "As Sailors become more senior," Harms said, "education will provide more strategic perspectives, and develop more effective management and business practices. Leadership development will be more position-focused to align with roles across a career. Ultimately, from the earliest days of their careers, our Sailors and their leaders will know what professional military education is expected and required." Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 263-04 outlines the implementation strategy for the comprehensive plan, which will impact every Sailor in the Navy. Our staff is aggressively developing flexible learning opportunities for the components of PME," said Harms. "Implementation of the continuum is essential to the success of Seapower 21, and for the growth and development of our people to meet the challenges of today

and the future." JPME will provide understanding of the principles of jointness that underpin Seapower 21. Education in joint matters will enhance the ability of naval leaders to provide unique and complementary warfighting from the sea to joint force commanders. Timely completion of appropriate JMPE will be a key consideration in identifying future Navy leaders. According to Harms, NPME will provide a broad, common understanding of the Navy and its full capabilities, and better prepare Sailors to effectively perform their missions across the full spectrum of naval and joint military operations. NPME will also be sequenced across a career, and address three core competencies of the naval profession: military studies, professionalism, and national and global security. NPME will also be incorporated into the Five Vector Model for all Sailors, and will become a staple in both officer and enlisted accession training. The Center for Naval Leadership has taken the lead, in conjunction with the

Naval Post Graduate School, Naval War College, the Naval Historical Center, Naval Justice School and the Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics at the U.S. Naval Academy, in developing a primary level course that will be implemented later this year. Content from this course will be used as the baseline for developing an intermediate level course for senior enlisted personnel. Officials hope to have the first intermediate course available by mid-fiscal year 2005. Harms' senior enlisted leader, NETC Force Master Chief FORCM Michael J. McCalip, said the program is coming at the right time. "The Navy is experiencing transformation everywhere," McCalip said, "and providing a relevant PME program for all Sailors directly supports the Sea Warrior of the 21st century. We believe PME will provide us with a smarter, more agile force ready to meet every mission challenge." McCalip credited the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) with

taking the Navy to new levels of excellence with his commitment to providing more educational opportunities for Sailors. "PME is the right human capital investment for the Navy to make," McCalip stated, "and it will provide our organization with a huge return on our investment as we press forward in to the future. These are exciting times for Sailors." Distance learning, Harms believes, will be a key tool for Sailors to further their education and meet the goals of PME. In fact, he said, statistics show a substantial increase in the

number of people enrolled in distance learning over the last three years. "This (distance learning) is gaining steam from the grass roots of the organization," Harms added. "The Sailors like the flexibility this approach provides, and they want it." Under PME, advanced education will emphasize the development of a technical or analytical knowledge base, critical thinking skills, an innovative mindset, and competencies to lead the Navy in the future. These education opportunities will include certificates, degree programs, and

courses and seminars tailored to meet the professional requirements of all Sailors. "We are transforming the way our Navy develops and equips the extraordinary men and women who choose to serve as members of the world's finest military," said Harms. "As our Navy becomes more high tech, our workforce will get smaller and smarter. We're going to need critical thinkers and agile learners if we're going to achieve the Seapower 21 Navy that the CNO envisions. What we're pursuing here is a future force that we believe will both want to be, and

need to be, more educated than ever before." For related news, visit the Naval Education and Training Command Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/cnet. Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Naval Education and Training Command, Pensacola, Fla.

Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statement 2004

a Control number		OMB No. 1545-0046	
b Employer's identification number	c Employer's name, address, and ZIP code	d Social security number	e Social security tax withheld
f Medicare wage and tips	g Medicare tax withheld	h Social security tips	i Allocated tips
j Advance EIC payment	k Dependent care benefits	l 12a Social Security for line 12	l 14 Social Security for line 14
m <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory employee <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement plan <input type="checkbox"/> Third party sick pay			
15 State (Employer's state ID, no.)	16 State wages, tips, etc.	17 State income tax	18 Local wages, tips, etc.
19 Local income tax	20 Locality name		

Copy 2 To Be Filed With Employee's State, City, or Local Income Tax Return

ANY DAY

In the Navy

All Hands' photo editors are looking for the year's top photos for the October "Any Day in the Navy" issue. Deadline for submission is July 15, 2005. Send your best shots taken between July 1, 2004, and July 1, 2005, to: anyday@mediacen.navy.mil

For information on submissions: www.mediacen.navy.mil/still/anyday.htm

EYES IN THE SKY

Story and Photos
by PH3 Todd Frantom

◀ During early morning preflight

systems preparation, Sailors man the Ground Control Station (GCS) and Tracking and Communications Unit (TCU), in the land-based configuration.

It's 1991 and Operation *Desert Storm* is in full swing near Kuwait City. A choking smoke fills the air, the result of oil refinery fires intentionally set by Iraqi soldiers. Machine gun fire can be heard in all directions, along with constant explosions from mortars. War is everywhere, but something is different—there's a buzzing in the air.

While holding down defenses on Faylaka Island off the coast near Kuwait City, a group of 27 Iraqis experienced the new buzz first-hand. Flying at a low altitude just over the soldiers' heads, they recognized there could soon be 2,000 pounds of bombs landing at their feet from the battleship USS *Wisconsin* (BB 63). The Iraqis made the right choice, and using handkerchiefs, shirts and sheets, they signaled their desire to surrender—to an unmanned vehicle with a 16-foot wide wingspan.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world in mid-America, a teenage boy's curiosity for these buzz makers came alive.

"While working at the local airport in my hometown of Cincinnati, I became interested in radio-control aircraft," said Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class Timothy Davis. "I bought my first plane, used, at a local hobby shop. The plane was called an *Eaglet* about 60 inches wide, fully

assembled. I was hooked immediately, just watching the aircraft fly, knowing I had full control. Then bringing it home with a safe landing was awesome," he added.

Little did Davis know that his new-found addiction would become his career.

Three years later, these two worlds collided when Davis was stationed at Fleet Composite Squadron (VC) 6 Detachment Patuxent River—the same command whose

aircraft the Iraqis surrendered to during *Desert Storm*.

"When I was a teenager, I never dreamed that I would grow up and be able to work my love of radio flyers into a job, not to mention be a pilot of a multi-million dollar aircraft that flies combat missions. It's just ironic that while I was just starting with remote control aircraft they were actually playing a vital role in wars around the

world," said Davis.

Like the small-scale *Eaglet* he started with prior to his Navy career, Davis now remotely pilots a *Pioneer* unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), the first of its kind for the Navy. *Pioneer* provides intelligence imagery for tactical commanders on land and at sea. Since its inception in the 1980s, *Pioneer* has flown more than 23,000 hours in direct support of Navy operational commanders.

Pioneer has a low radar cross section and a small infrared signature that minimizes its detection.

According to Davis, flying *Pioneer* isn't much different from controlling his old flyers, according to Davis. "The plane we use, called the MIG, is about six feet across, only half the size of *Pioneer*," said Davis. "I think all of us who pilot *Pioneer* have developed a love for flying in one form or

another. We are the only enlisted personnel in the Navy who get to call ourselves pilots. I have a strong pride in what I do, especially when I go TAD and land one of those suckers on board a ship during a real mission, which I had the pleasure of doing a couple of years ago."

The enlisted pilots of Webster Field, Patuxent River, Md., seem to have established a brotherhood among themselves, taking time after work and on weekends to further pursue their love of flying.

"We'll get permission from the Webster Field flight control for air space at certain times so that we can fly our personal planes," said AMS2 Harry Canter, also a pilot for VC-6. "Although it seems to be play time, the truth is that we are actually getting valuable practice for actual missions."

Piloting the *Pioneer* UAV is only a small part in the overall operation of this remote-control aircraft. VC-6 is a squadron like any other in the Navy. They test and evaluate the *Pioneer* system along with other UAVs for integration into Navy and Marine units. Although the jobs are unique for the air community, the UAVs are handled just like any full-scale aircraft before and after each flight.

AMS2 Christopher Watters recently joined the squadron and found the small aircraft challenging.

"I came from a squadron where I worked on the P-3 *Orion*, which is a large aircraft. Working on the *Pioneer* is totally different; I feel like an airman again," said Watters. "I joined the Navy for diversity in my job, and coming here has certainly afforded me that. Regardless of the small size of our aircraft, nothing is overlooked in the vehicle's operation."

For testing and evaluation of the *Pioneer* at Webster Field, shore-based procedures are used. The *Pioneer* system can also be deployed aboard LPD-class naval vessels.

A normal flight day for the *Pioneer* starts at 5:30 a.m. with a mission brief and flight plan. Pilots and operations personnel must calculate normal and emergency air vehicle capabilities with existing conditions and mission requirements.

"*Pioneer* can be drastically affected by



► After a successful arrested landing of the *Pioneer*, ASAN Kyle Chandler toads up the arresting gear. Recovery requires 426 feet on a regular runway and 230 feet on a short field.



▲ **Prior to starting the engine**, a qualified fire guard is stationed near the engine and remains in readiness with a fire bottle until the engine is operating.

◀ **Driven by a pusher propeller**, the aircraft relays video and/or telemetry information from its payload to the ground control station (GCS) and/or portable control station (PCS) in real time. *Pioneer* is used for reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, fire support adjustment and battle damage assessment.

weather, so careful attention is taken in the planning for flights,” said Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class (AW) Robert Ross “If it’s raining, snowing or even drizzling, we aren’t flying.”

With weather permitting, all systems are made operational aboard the ground control

station (GCS) a small, highly transportable shelter about the size of small room.

After systems are up and ready, *Pioneer* is pulled out of its hangar bay by a vehicle adjacent to the runway for startups. First and foremost a foreign object damage (FOD) walk-down takes place. Although, seemingly absurd for a remote control aircraft it’s very necessary.

Pioneer has a screaming 27-horsepower, 2-stroke engine capable of turning a small pebble into a deadly projectile. Not to mention a single spinning blade that could leave a person with a really bad day.

“Safety is ultra important. Even with this remote control flyer,” said Ross. “The *Pioneer* makes the most annoying buzzing sound, there is no question why protective hearing equipment has to be worn during the operation of the aircraft.”

► **Pilot, AM1(AW) Timothy Davis** peers into the sky, locating the *Pioneer* he controls from the ground.

▼ **Flight control boxes** are used during manual flight mode or “sticks” for takeoffs and landing. The controls closely resemble regular remote control aircrafts, where basic pitch and roll commands are carried out by the proper movements of the sticks.





Even starting the *Pioneer* is similar to its larger manned aircraft. Beginning with preflight inspections overseen by a qualified mission commander who ensures a complete system inspection has been accomplished prior to flight and ending with the crew chief pulling chocks and tie-downs. There is also a fire guard stationed near the engine who remains in readiness with a fire bottle until the engine is operating.

“Although a lot is set in place for starting *Pioneer*, the actual start-up closely resembles that of my remote control airplanes,” said Davis. “Like placing a T-rod drill bit into the nose prop and spinning it up, which starts the engine; however this is on a much larger scale.”

Once *Pioneer* is started, the aircraft is moved onto the flight line and positioned in the proper wind direction. Closely resembling

◀ **AT1(AW) Robert Ross** prepares a personal aircraft for flight at Webster Field.

a launch from an aircraft carrier, the crew chief signals the final launch sequence for the UAV. But there are events taking place that seem almost absurd and comical.

“For my first launch, I was the hold back, which means you stand at the back of *Pioneer* and hold on for dear life, not letting the aircraft go until the crew chief signals me to do so,” said Watters. “That has to be the most ridiculous thing I have ever done in my Navy career.”

But there is a logical explanation for everything that takes place during the launch and recovery of *Pioneer*.

“We launch *Pioneer* using a control from the PCS then switch to a basic radio controller and that’s when the fun begins. It’s much more intense to fly, with speeds reaching 50 miles per hour and reaching altitudes of 1,200 feet, it far surpasses my personal radio flyers.

“The range of it is also impressive,” added Davis. “It can fly about 100 miles on the GCS and 20 miles on PCS for approximately four hours. This is an incredible job. Just think, I’m getting paid for flying remote control aircraft,” said Davis.”

“WE ARE THE ONLY ENLISTED PERSONNEL IN THE NAVY WHO GET TO CALL OURSELVES [AERIAL] PILOTS.”

— AMS1 TIMOTHY DAVIS

The *Pioneer* system also has protocols for automatically returning the aircraft or sending it to a designated location if it goes off course. Enlisted pilots like Davis, train and evaluate the *Pioneer* system every day. What started as a teenage interest for him paved the way for technology and the evolving unmanned vehicles.

Today’s enemy hears a sound coming from a dot in the sky. It’s a mere speck to the wayward fighter, especially one expecting large, swift planes streaking through the sky at light speeds. But, the sound is coming from a UAV. Meanwhile, *Pioneer* successfully touches down and

takes off again, guided by enlisted pilots and crews at Webster Field – the place where the buzz is born. 📷

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200503/feature_1/

► **Prior to starting** the *Pioneer*, flight personnel conduct a foreign object damage (FOD) walkdown on the flight line. While it seems absurd for an unmanned aerial vehicle, it’s necessary for safety.

▼ **AMC Frank Paulus and AM2 Harry Canter** hone their flight skills on the “MIG,” a training aircraft used to acclimate pilots to the proper use of control “sticks.”



The Laws of Engagement

Front office Sailors report to the front lines

*A*ttention! Applebees!,” the leader of the hovering pack loudly bellows to the diners in the restaurant while motioning to everyone to clap along with her and her posse. “Today, we’re celebrating Rachel’s last day of work at the base’s Legal Services Office before she leaves on a six-month deployment, and we’d like everyone

to help us celebrate her farewell.

“So, Sailor,” the waitress demands, turning her attention back to Legalman 2nd Class Rachel Christofferson, “where ya headed?”

After recovering from being put on the spot, Christofferson replies in her soft voice, “Iraq.”

◀ **Although anxious** about leaving her family behind and what ultimately lies before her in Iraq, LN2 Rachel Christofferson eagerly and adeptly tackles each new challenge.



▲ **“No Mommy. Please don’t go!”**

snuffles Aubry Christofferson as her mother prepared to enter the airport security checkpoint in Jacksonville, Fla.

▼ **LN2 Rachel Christofferson is**

caught off-guard by the waitstaff’s singing and cheering at her going-away luncheon. Things quickly quieted down when she said she was going to Iraq.



The effect of her response is instantaneous—as if the entire establishment has been frozen in time.

The waitstaff stops mid-clap and looks as if someone had just popped all their balloons. Loud gasps and quiet, anxious murmurs ripple through the lunch crowd. In the back corner booth a woman whispers not at all discreetly, “They’re sending that little girl to Iraq? Good Lord, that’s no

reason to celebrate.”

Only Christofferson and her co-workers manage to maintain their light-heartedness by bursting into fits of laughter at the overwhelming absurdity and awkwardness of the moment.

Almost a month to the day following her memorable farewell luncheon, Christofferson (who has since traded her crisp, starched working whites for some slightly dusty desert cammies) sits half a world away from the cramped restaurant table. She’s administering an IV to Pablo Fonseca, a civilian firefighter and fellow student at the three-day Combat Lifesaver Course (CLC) at Camp Victory, Iraq.

With an array of needles, tubing and bandages spread out on the sterile white cloth in front of her, Christofferson tightens a rubber tourniquet-like strap across Fonseca’s bicep, hovers a 14-gauge needle over his rapidly fattening vein and listens attentively to last minute details on the optimal number of drips per minute from the CLC instructor observing her.

“As first responders to the scene of an

► **“Besides looking good** on an eval, volunteering for duty in Iraq is a chance to be part of history and experience challenges our rate typically doesn’t offer,” says LN2 Rachel Christofferson from the safety of her quiet Navy Legal Services Office, King’s Bay, Ga.

accident in the states, only certified medical personnel would be permitted to start an IV,” Army Spec. Troy Galvan, a medic and CLC instructor, tells the group while weaving between the students and first-aid equipment.

“But things are different here. In Iraq, after an ambush or attack, it may take a while for help to arrive on scene. At that point, the only thing that may save your buddy’s life is your ability to stop the bleeding and quickly get some fluids back into him or her.” He pauses, eyes the group, then continues, “This is particularly important for those of you who will be traveling in convoys.”

As if on cue, a loud explosion caused the compact trailer to shudder slightly and the sound of small-arms fire erupted in the distance. But, in their short time in country, the sound of incoming rocket fire has become so familiar to Christofferson and her fellow Camp Victory residents that barely a moment passes before most of them have successfully inserted their very first IVs.

▼ **While waiting at the airport,**

LN2 Rachel Christofferson starts the journal she bought to record her time in Iraq. “I think it’s important that my children know what I experienced while I was separated from them,” she said.



Minutes later, another instructor ducks into the trailer with news of the explosion. A suicide driver has detonated his vehicle-born improvised explosive device (VBIED) on Route Irish (a notoriously dangerous five-mile stretch of road connecting Camp Victory to downtown Baghdad), killing a civilian medic and injuring three other passengers. Attacks along the route have become so frequent that helicopters have become a means of travel to and from the city.

This is not the case for Christofferson. Her office continues to make the trip by convoy three days a week. And tomorrow she’ll be driving—hence, the need for a Navy LN to learn about IVs. But if news of the fatal attack has shaken her, it certainly doesn’t show. She continues to joke with Fonseca while adjusting the amount of saline flowing through his IV, and waits for the instructor’s remarks.

After checking to make sure Christofferson has secured all excess tubing with medical tape, Galvan nods approval and asks, “Ready to be on the receiving end of the stick?”

Christofferson’s transition from a front office administrative Sailor to combat-ready fighter has been gradual, but complete. Back at her safe, quiet office at Subase King’s Bay, Ga., the only imminent dangers Christofferson faced

were paper cuts and the possible onset of carpal tunnel syndrome. And, although her primary responsibilities as a Navy LN have remained the same, the hostile environment she now operates in has called for her to become a soldier, of sorts, as well.

From M-16 rifle and 9mm pistol qualification to the Rules of Engagement briefing to earning a Humvee driver’s license to receiving her Combat Lifesaver’s certification, Christofferson has enthusiastically stepped up to each new challenge assigned. She’s worked hard to master each new task, knowing that any new skill she

“I like knowing that the work I’m doing here is making a difference and is a part of history.”

— LN2 RACHEL CHRISTOFFERSON.

acquires from the Army just may serve to bring her home safely.

With medical kit in hand, Christofferson returns back to the Camp Victory Detainee Operations Legal Office, to which she’s currently assigned, and prepares for the next morning’s convoy.

The Detainee Operations Legal Office



maintains approximately 33,000 records of all detainees held at Abu Ghraib prison since the beginning of the war. While a majority of detainees have since been released from the prison, records remain on file at Camp Victory.

Three days every week, the office's small staff, comprised of legal workers from all branches of service, convoys to Baghdad to present detainee records to Iraqi panel members at Combined Review and Release Boards (CRRB). Christofferson's job is to track each detainee's record and be familiar with its status, ensure the records up for review are transported to CRRB on the appropriate date and that the panel's ultimate decision is documented in the computer system for subsequent reports.

"Most people make the mistake of thinking that because these guys work in a legal office at Camp Victory, they somehow have it easy," said Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge (NCOIC) Army Master Sergeant Evan Wynn. "What they fail to recognize is that these men and women work extremely long hours. All the paper-work they process must be done correctly

the first time around due to the documents' high visibility. And, on top of everything, they convoy down some of the nastiest, deadliest roads in the region several times each week.

"Irish is attacked almost daily by RPGs, IEDs, VBIEDs and small arms fire. Fortunately for us, our group hasn't been targeted yet," continued Wynn. "In part, it's just plain luck. But it's also because when we go out that gate, we're ready for a fight. We're armed to the teeth; we're hauling down the road at high speeds; and we're constantly shifting lanes. We look like we're ready for anything, and most terrorists out there are lazy and look for a soft target."

True to Wynn's description, Christofferson looks more like a soldier than a paper-pushing Sailor. Packing up the Hummer she's assigned to drive, she adjusts her kevlar helmet and heavy body armor. Her 9mm pistol and M-16 rifle are locked, loaded and within immediate reach. As she stows the newly acquired medical bag in the back seat and starts the vehicle, her characteristic half-smile is replaced with a look of aggressive

▲ **The five-mile stretch** of road from Camp Victory into downtown Baghdad, Iraq, nicknamed "Route Irish," is notorious for the number of insurgent attacks that occur almost daily. Camp Victory's Legal Office staff travels Route Irish three days each week for the Criminal Review Boards. Says Christofferson. "I'm not messing around, if any vehicle tries to cut into our convoy, or separate us — I will knock them off the road."

determination.

"One of my co-workers who just left hit it right on the head when he described the drive down Irish as an eight-minute adrenaline rush," said Christofferson. "Your nerves are in hyperdrive because you're constantly looking for an attack."

As the six Hummers roll down the asphalt, most civilian traffic automatically moves aside. Drivers look straight ahead, hands gripping their steering wheels tightly, as if afraid to give any wrong signals to the intimidating group. And, when traffic suddenly begins to stop for unknown reasons, Christofferson and her

► **Mixing business with entertainment,**

LN2 Rachel Christofferson checks and cleans her weapons while watching movies in her room. "Sand and dust get into everything around here," says Christofferson. "So, I clean and oil my weapons pretty regularly — at least once a week. I wouldn't want a weapon jamming up when I really need it because I was too tired to clean it the night before."

fellow convoy drivers avoid the danger of being trapped by instinctively cutting over the median and barreling down the on-coming lanes.

Although the crew arrives without incident on this particular morning, attacks along the motorway and incoming mortars aren't the only dangers to be faced in Iraq.

Later the same week on another trip into Baghdad's International Zone (IZ), the CRRB legal team begins their morning as usual. Military police have already swept the offices for suspicious materials, and a few of the Iraqi panel members had begun to arrive when a VBIED with 1,000 pounds of explosives is detonated at the checkpoint only 200 meters from the building.

The tremor from the blast shakes the building's massive frame and windows. After ensuring everyone is safe (including the panel members still en route), the board presses on as usual.

The danger to every person on the board—military and civilian alike—is ever-present. Yet despite the threat to life and limb, members of the CRRB continue to come together three days a week because everyone believes in the end result.

"What we do here is important because this is our country," explains an unnamed Iraqi panel member whose car was flipped onto another vehicle 20 yards away during the checkpoint explosion.

"These detainees could be our neighbors, friends or family. In some cases, men have just been in the wrong place at the wrong time," he continues. "Others pose serious threats to our way of life. It's up to us to weigh each case thoroughly and thoughtfully."

Army Col. John Phelps, officer-in-charge and legal advisor of Camp Victory's Detainee Operations office, additionally



stresses the importance of his office's joint-service atmosphere.

"Having a team comprised of military members from all branches of service brings together people with various levels of education and experience. And, in so doing, allows us to view legal matters from a variety of perspectives," says Phelps.

"Christofferson and other Sailors, Marines or Airmen like her play an important role to our office's overall success."

The hardships and dangers Christofferson has become accustomed to in her new field office are many. But the most difficult challenge for the 24-year-old has been the separation from her family.



◀ **Every morning as** LN2 Rachel Christofferson walks to the Legal Office on Camp Victory, she passes a picturesque mosque. The small, nondescript building to the right is where Saddam Hussein's initial hearing was conducted following his capture.


“When I left, my little boy, David, was barely crawling, and in the short time I’ve been here he’s already walking,” said a downhearted Christofferson.

She often stays later than the 8 p.m. office hours to call home. And, as any front-line soldier would do, she deliberately avoids revealing any details of her day that might cause them worry.

“It seems to be particularly difficult for my middle child. My husband, Chris, says that every time Aubry speaks with me she regresses to acting and talking like a baby for days afterward,” Christofferson says. “So, we’ve decided that it’s best that I don’t talk with her every phone call. I know it’s hard on the kids, but I couldn’t use them as an excuse not to come over here and do my part.

“I think duty in Iraq is something every legalman should experience,” continues Christofferson. “It is a chance to do and learn more than our rate typically offers. And I like knowing that the work I’m doing here is making a difference and is a part of history,” she concludes.

There are those who may argue that a Sailor’s place is at sea, while a soldier’s is on the ground. Yet, as operational needs in Iraq continue to increase, so will the Navy’s presence in theater.

LN2 Rachel Christofferson is only one of many Sailors voluntarily reporting for duty in dangerous combat zones doing exactly what the Navy has trained her to do—perform her rated specialty under extraordinary circumstances. As it turns out, Sailors (even the administrative type) can make damned fine soldiers, too. 

Darby is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

► **Website Exclusive**

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200503/feature_2/

“When you can’t go where you want to, when you want to, you haven’t got command of the sea. Command of the sea is the bedrock for all our war plans.”

— ADM FORREST SHERMAN, CNO
KOREA MINE CRISIS, OCTOBER 1950

The Ingleside

Inside the Navy's mine countermeasures community

NAVY

Story and photos by JO1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky





▲ A Q-24 sonar array is removed from an MH-53E *Sea Dragon* from HM-15, NAS Corpus Christi, Texas. *Sea Dragons* tow a Q-24 sonar mine hunter at speeds less than 25 knots while searching for mines.

Don't rush Petty Officer Chiles while he works. The fate of your ship might someday depend on his patience.

"We hold everyone's lives in our hands," said Mineman 3rd Class Jonathan Chiles, of USS *Devastator* (MCM 6). "This is no job, it's life or death."

Cheap, stealthy and deadly, sea-borne mines have wreaked more havoc on American warships and account for more than 75 percent of all battle damage to those warships since World War II. "Mines are the biggest threat to our vessels, and they're everywhere," said George Betz, operations department head, Naval Support Activity (NSA), Panama City, Fla.

The threat is so great that Naval Station Ingleside, Texas, (home of the Navy's Mine Warfare Command), has an entire fleet of specialized ships like *Devastator*, helicopters and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD)

personnel dedicated to hunting, sweeping and eliminating mines. Known as the mine countermeasures (MCM) triad, these Sailors sail, fly and dive into the perils of the world's waters.

Sailing such treacherous seas demands a Sailor with the right attitude.

"Not everyone can do it. You have to have the right personality," said Electronics Technician 3rd Class Jimmy Rush, of USS *Devastator*. "When people are first exposed to the 'Ingleside Navy,' it freaks them out. We're a lot like airline security—slow, meticulous and irritating. But, like them, if we don't take our time and do as good a job as we can, then we put the whole fleet in danger."

Sailors aboard USS *Tripoli* (LPH 10), USS *Princeton* (CG 59) and USS *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG 58) know those dangers all too well. All three ships were damaged by

mines in recent times.

Though mine warfare's true beginnings are undocumented, Americans first used the sneaky, sea-lane booby traps during the Revolutionary War. Colonists used powder kegs with slow-burning fuses to attack aggressive British ships entering American harbors. Since then, debate has raged among modern war fighters as to the ethical basis for using such a weapon.

"Rogue nations are going to do what they think they need to do to inhibit an opposing force," said CDR Bob Findley, commanding officer, Naval Support Activity (NSA) Panama City, Fla.

Honorable or not, nations all over the world use mines because of their relative cheapness and ease of employment to persuade aggressive enemies to launch their attacks somewhere else. Once a mine is deployed, it doesn't need food, a paycheck

▲ An MH-53E *Sea Dragon* from HM-15, NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, tows a Q-24 sonar mine hunter to locate mines during a mine warfare training exercise conducted off the coast of Panama City, Fla.

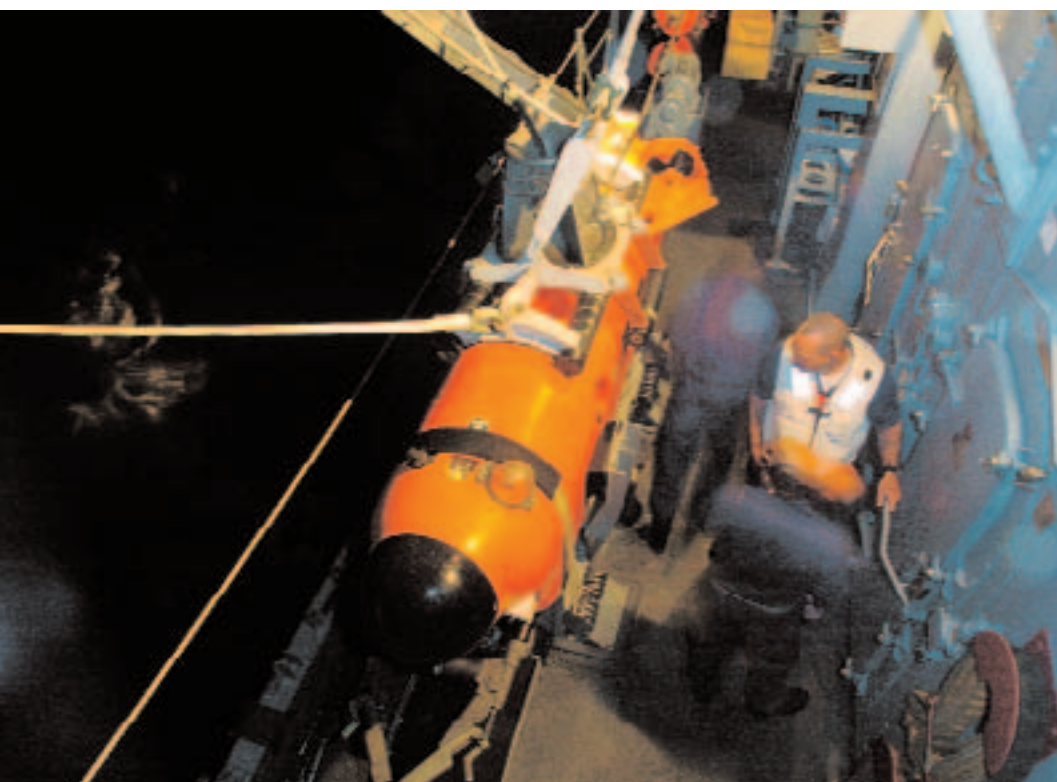
► An MH-53E *Sea Dragon* from HM-14, NAS Norfolk, Va., receives routine post-flight maintenance during a Gulf of Mexico mine warfare exercise (GOMEX) off the coast of Panama City, Fla. The MH-53Es from HM-14, and HM-15 NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, are participating with mine countermeasure ships; Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 6 Dets. 2 and 4 from Ingleside, Texas; and HSV-2 *Swift*.





◀ **A RHIB carrying** EOD divers from EODMU 6 Det 4 heads back to USS *Chief* (MCM 14) after successfully diving on a mine-like shape. The role of an EODMU aboard an MCM is to locate, identify and render mines safe.

▼ **The SLQ-48** Mine Neutralization Vehicle (MNV) carries video surveillance cameras that transmit real-time imagery to the MNV pilots. It's one of two methods MCMs have to positively identify mines, the other being EODMU divers. Situational conditions determine whether or not the MNV or EODMU divers are used.



or liberty calls. All it needs is a very unlucky ship to cross its path.

While a mine doesn't have to be high tech to work, searching for them does.

"A needle in a haystack is a lot easier to find than a mine," said Findley. "Three fourths of the earth's surface is water. Finding a mine is more like finding something the size of a speck of sand on the beach."

Since mines don't emit sounds, produce heat, make transient sounds or poke

periscopes through the surface of the water to attack their prey, minemen like Chiles have to look for shapes.

One of the ways MCM Sailors do this is with a bottom mapping sonar system that can identify mine-like shapes as small as a tin can. The process is tedious, but effective. On occasion, mine searches can reward the steadfast, serious-minded hunters with light-hearted discoveries.

"We've found file cabinets, soda machines

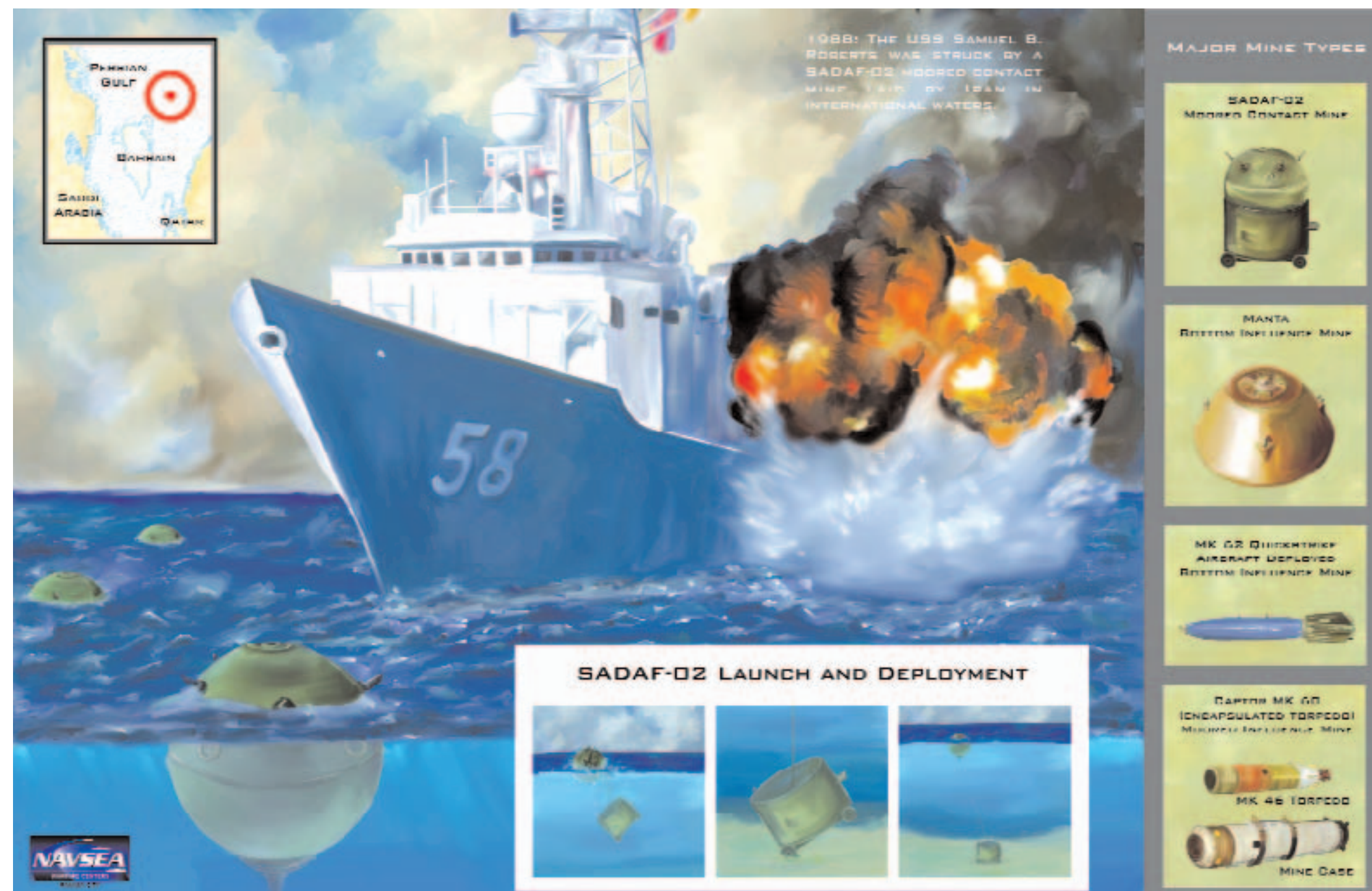
and downed airplanes," said Rush. "But the most interesting thing we found was a toilet, which I think is pretty neat because it's made entirely of porcelain."

Here's how a mine-like shape scenario might take place on an MCM like *Devastator*.

Once the Sailors in the combat information center (CIC) identify a mine-like object on sonar, the ship's commanding officer and the EOD detachment's officer-in-charge make a decision about the best

way to visually verify the contact as a mine.

On *Devastator*, a remotely-piloted submersible vehicle, known to her crew simply as "Willy," and highly-trained EOD technicians are at the CO's disposal. "Willy," officially named the SLQ-48 Mine Neutralization Vehicle (MNV), carries video surveillance cameras that transmit real-time imagery to the MNV pilots back aboard *Devastator*. Robotic arms at the front of Willy allow the pilots to move, cut and search





the shape to determine its real identity. “It’s [basic] technology, but it works,” said Rush.

Enlisted personnel are solely responsible for flying the sub-aquatic craft because



of the complexity involved in mastering their flight.

“Officers usually only have a two-year tour aboard *Devastator*, so there’s no time to become proficient,” said Mineman 2nd Class (SW) Ralph Kersey, an SLQ-48 mine neutralization vehicle (MNV) pilot. “We’re

◀ MM1 (EOD/SS) Travis Brown

takes cover in a bunker the team built during the exploitation of a MK 36 Mod II mine. Because of the inherent danger of working with mines, EOD techs perform a lot of their initial operations remotely, based on blast and fragmentation calculations.

here for four and five years, so we get much better at it.”

While finding mines is tough, it isn’t the only challenge Sailors aboard *Devastator* have to face. At an operational cruising speed of between one and three knots, life aboard *Devastator* can be slow—real slow. And that suits her crew just fine.

“We have to be overly cautious,” said Chiles. “I’d rather identify a lobster trap than not classify it as a mine-like object because if it’s a lobster trap—O.K. We live to hunt mines again tomorrow, but if it’s not, we’re dead.” *Devastator*’s sloth-like pace isn’t the only downside to

serving aboard MCMs.

“Compared to a destroyer,” said LCDR Kendall Gennick, USS *Devastator*’s commanding officer, “this ship rides rough. It’s affected by the wind more, especially when we’re trying to hover. Everyone gets seasick eventually on one of these things.”

Despite sailing on a ship that rocks more than a bobble-head doll, most Sailors aboard MCMs refuse to serve on any other ship.

“I get to do more aboard here than I’d ever do on a bigger ship,” said Kersey, “I get to learn other people’s rates and other people’s fields. I know everyone’s names,

◀ EODMU 6, Det. 2 Officer in Charge

LT Patrick Gerhardstein, closes out a long day after his team successfully raised, towed and beached a MK36, Mod II mine during GOMEX 04-2.

their kid’s names, their wives’ names and where they went to school. I have friends in a lot of rates. And, [Naval Station] Ingleside is such a small base that I know most people on the other MCMs too.”

A smaller crew does more than breed familiarity; it serves as a factory for super Sailors.

“Minemen are jacks of all trades,” said Chiles. “We are all the rates, QMs, ITs, OSs, STGs, ETs. It’s tough, but it makes us better Sailors. The ship is too small to have a lot of people, so we learn everyone’s job. If they ever put me on a different platform, they’ll be able to put me just about anywhere.”

MCM crews aren’t the only ones who notice the crew’s camaraderie.

“On a carrier you’re just another body,” said frequent MCM rider, Builder 1st Class (EOD/SW) Denis “J” Smaistrle, EODMU 6 Det 2. “Nobody notices you. There are so many people, so what’s seven to 14 more? On a carrier you stand in line just to think. The crew is a lot tighter on a small [ship] because you have an opportunity to meet everybody. I prefer MCMs over carriers because of the crew.”

Meanwhile, the helicopters that fly mine countermeasure missions are the biggest birds on the flight line, much to the delight of their crews.

“There’s plenty of room to wander around on a *Sea Dragon*,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic (Equipment) 3rd Class (NAC) Renee A. Pestel, second crewman Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 15, “SH-60s are real small. I like the protection bubble I have on my (MH) 53, and we have a variety of missions. There’s always something for us to do.”

Pestel’s roominess comes with a price, though. Helicopter missions demand a snail’s pace just like their wave-riding brothers. Mine countermeasure helicopters work a little faster, at eight to 15 knots, streaming a variety of mine-hunting and

sweeping equipment in the water. It’s almost like an aerial deep-sea fishing boat trolling for Blue Marlin.

“Hunting mines in a helicopter is like fishing, you just have to find the right lure,” said Kevin Oakes, Inspection and Survey Airborne Mine Countermeasure Tactics project engineer.

As part of MINEWARCOM’s commitment to keeping the fleet safe, MCMs and MH-53E squadrons are forward deployed to Bahrain. In typical MCM triad multi-mission fashion, MH-53E crews learned that having a heavy lift helicopter comes in handy.

“In the Gulf we did a lot of VOD (vertical onboard delivery) and that was new to me,” said Pestel. “Working in Bahrain was the same thing we did as training, so it

“On a carrier you stand in line just to think. The crew is a lot tighter on a [small ship] because you have an opportunity to meet everybody. I prefer MCMs over carriers because of the crew.”

— BU1(EOD/SW) DENIS “J” SMAISTRLE
EODMU 6, DET. 2

wasn’t a shock. But my first live mission after school was a reality check because gear was flying everywhere. It wasn’t as easy as it looked. The scariest thing I’ve ever done is landing at night on a one-spotter boat.”

One might think that hunting mines takes the Navy’s bravest Sailors. *Devastator*’s captain disagrees.

“Minemen aren’t any braver than other Sailors,” said Gennick. “All Sailors are willing to serve their country no matter what the danger is; they’re all ready to go into harm’s way.” ■

Pinsky is a photojournalist with All Hands.

Website Exclusive

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Rising to the Top

Religious Program Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rita Hurts has an unhesitating streak of determination coursing through her. She has seized every opportunity during seven years in the Navy, and recently took the position as the top Sailor in her field.

Hurts, the only religious specialist for Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, forward-deployed to Yokosuka, Japan, was named the Navy's Religious Program Specialist (RP) of the Year for 2004.

"I think it verifies the kind of work she's done," said DESRON 15 Staff Chaplain (LT) Robert Jones, about Hurts' achievement. "It sets her in the upper direction of the Navy and validates the unique work of RPs. When you see her, you see how an RP is supposed to function," he said. "She's a self starter, self-motivated; she's mature, with a wide range of experiences, and she is seasoned because she has a great attitude combined with that."

Hurts is the second person to receive the award, which is intended to recognize top professionals who work in that field. She finished as the Pacific Fleet RP of the Year in 2003.

According to CDR Newman Evans, Hurts' commanding officer and chief staff officer for DESRON 15, "It's one of those things that's easy because it's something she did. It's already done. The types of things she does for us speak for themselves."

Hurts serves as a key player in management, coordination and training of lay leaders aboard the seven ships of DESRON 15.

"When the chaplain is not personally available to one of the ships, we use a lay leader under his direction who answers to the captain of the ship," said Hurts. "We provide training for them, and I make sure they have all the materials they need— things like bibles, books and study materials."

Through her work with the ships, and after diligently completing necessary qualifications, Hurts managed to qualify as an Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist aboard USS *Cushing* (DD 985) on Dec. 7, 2003.

At the Chapel of Hope aboard Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Hurts again seized an opportunity in the Navy. She reenlisted and received a selective reenlistment bonus of \$15,000 for taking orders to the Training Support Center, Great Lakes, Ill., where she will help coordinate and facilitate A-school training, and maybe even help some determined junior Sailor embark on a journey toward RP of the Year. 🌟

Dille is a photojournalist assigned to the public affairs office, Commander, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan.

Story and photo by JO2(SW) Patrick Dille

Focus on Service



Eye on the Fleet

Eye on the Fleet is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Chief of Information Navy Visual News Service. We are looking for **high impact**, quality photography from **Sailors** in the fleet to showcase the American Sailor in **action**.

► A member of the U.S. Navy Parachute Demonstration Team, "The Leapfrogs," arrives at the 50-yard line during pre-game ceremonies at the 105th Army-Navy game.

Photo by JOC Craig Strawser



► CE3 Joe Tank mans a turret-mounted M-240B machine gun atop a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) to provide security while Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 clear debris from the streets of Fallujah, Iraq.

Photo by PH2 Phillip Forrest



◀ ABH3 Terrell T. Washington, assigned to Marine Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VMX) 22, braces himself from rotor wash of an MV-22 Osprey, as it lifts off the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3).

Photo by PHAN Sarah E. Ard

▼ LCDR Phillip Clay embraces his wife during a homecoming celebration aboard Naval Air Station Oceana, Va.

Photo by PH2 Danielle L. Hertlein



▼ BM2 Jeffery Bayless, front, supervises SN Francis Elevado as he directs a Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) toward the well deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA) 5.

Photo by PHAA Timothy Gunther



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The Final Word

Doin' It For Jerod

Story by JO1 Charles L. Ludwig

I'm not the kind of guy that gets easily taken in by motivational stories. Never have been.

So when I pass through a bookstore on the way to the sports section (the only section for me), I try to run through the self-improvement and motivational section as quickly as humanly possible, lest something actually rubs off on me.

But it always takes longer than I would hope. Apparently, there are a lot of people out there willing to write a lot of things so that we can all become a better, more enhanced public. And it makes for one heck of a big section in the bookstore.

In that section, you could find any number of books written by everyone from Dr. Phil to the dean of American self improvement, Donald Trump. If you have a problem, you better believe you can learn how to solve it there.

But if anyone ever asks me about how to become a better, more motivated person, I'm not sending them to Barnes & Noble. Nope, inquiring minds coming to me will be sent straight to Naval Air Reserve Point Mugu to see Yeoman 2nd Class Nancy Aguirre.

After years of not having the drive, impulse or time to put herself through the physical torture that comes with running a half-marathon, Aguirre found her inspiration in the form of a 14-year-old nephew of a co-worker.

His name was Jerod. And at the time, he was dying of leukemia. "I always had trouble making time to train for something as serious as a half-marathon," said Aguirre, who ran nothing longer than a 5K race before participating in the Santa Barbara News Press Half-Marathon on Nov. 6. "I've been wanting to do one for awhile, but between work and school (she's a full time student), I never felt like I had the time."

All that changed when she heard about Jerod Johnson, the

leukemia-stricken nephew of Chief Aviation Maintenance Administrationman (AW) Jill Stack. "For some reason, I just felt like I needed to do something to help," Aguirre said. "So I decided to run the race in his honor."

But running the race was the smallest part of what she did. As Aguirre began training for the 13-mile event, she also started

raising money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. "I just started accepting donations and talking to people about the disease and what it does to you," she said about her fundraising efforts. "A lot of times, the fact that I was running a race for Jerod never even came up. I just wanted to help the cause."

And help she did, raising more than \$1,000 for leukemia and lymphoma research before the run (she continues to raise money to this day). As for the actual race, Aguirre represented herself well, running the course in one hour, 43 minutes, good for 190th place out of more than 2,500 runners.

Aguirre's efforts were not lost on Stack. "It takes someone with a big heart to put their body through something like that in order to help others," she said. "I thought it was a great idea."

Unfortunately, Jerod wasn't able to see Aguirre run the race for him. He died Sept. 25, before Aguirre even had the chance to meet her teenage inspiration.

"It was hard on all of us," Aguirre said of Jerod's death. "There were a lot of tears flowing that day. I wish I could have met him and told him how important he was to us, but somehow, I think he knows."

You know what? Maybe I am the kind of guy that can get taken in by a motivational story after all. ■

Ludwig is a photojournalist for All Hands.



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